



Faith-Based Organizations Getting Involved with Summer Meals

As part of their mission, many faith-based organizations already have networks and programming that provide meals in local communities. Partnering with USDA in this effort can result in additional resources leading to a greater impact on child hunger. Organizations that do not have experience operating a food program can work with existing Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors that can provide the guidance needed to operate a successful summer meal site.

What are some ways to get involved?

- Operate a summer meal site open to the community.
- Provide programming at an existing summer meal site.
- Recruit volunteers from your congregations can help out a summer sites.
- Provide information about summer sites to your congregations.
- Allow nearby summer programs to use your kitchens to prepare meals.

Spotlight on Texas

In 2014, the Texas Hunger Initiative (THI) of Baylor University partnered with local churches and community volunteers in San Angelo, to address the problem of summer hunger. The area school was only able to serve summer meals during summer school, in the month of June. That's when a group of local churches and community members came up with a solution. They now operate meal sites at area churches and an apartment complex during July and August. They use their own resources to help sustain the program in their community – providing food and supplies, coordinating and leading activities at sites, distributing flyers about meal sites, and having Sunday School classes and youth groups serve meals.



In Waco, the Korean United Methodist Church, a longtime summer meals site, partnered with McLennan County Hunger Coalition to cover the cost for adults to eat meals with their children. In Dallas, the Watermark Community Church partners with THI to distribute flyers, serve meals, create programming, run activities, and much more at meal sites at apartment complexes. To learn more about THI and its efforts to expand access to summer meals, visit:

<http://www.baylor.edu/texashunger/index.php?id=85316>.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I find out what is already happening in my community around summer meals?

Contact your State agency to find out who the current sponsors are in your community, where sites were located last year, and where expansion efforts are taking place this year. You can find your State agency's contact information at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>.

2. What does it mean to supervise a site?

As a site supervisor, your dedication to your job will have a major impact on the success or failure of your sponsor's program. For example, since your sponsor's reimbursement is based on the daily records you keep of the meals prepared or delivered and served, how well you keep those records will directly affect your sponsor's program. You are the one who must alert your sponsor when something is wrong with the meals – when the food is spoiled or when there is too much or not enough food. By working cooperatively with your sponsor and following program guidelines, you can ensure that your site is successful.

3. What subjects should be included in the site supervisor training provided by the sponsor?

Sponsors are required to arrange a pre-operational training session for site supervisor. The training will cover:

- Kinds of meal service (self preparation or delivered) the site will have,
- Types of meals the site will serve (i.e., breakfast, lunch, snack, and/or supper),
- Times meals will be delivered and served,
- Recognizing and serving a complete meal,
- Proper method for counting meals,



- Trash removal service,
- Recordkeeping requirements,
- People to call about problems and when and where to call them,
- Local health and sanitation standards,
- Local security and safety considerations, and
- Nondiscrimination policy.

4. To participate as a site, how often will the State government staff visit?

Sponsors are required to make periodic, unannounced visits to each sponsored site. The State agency also visits sites, most likely prior to the beginning of SFSP operations, once during the first week, and again later in the summer for meal programs that operate for a long period of time. These visits are a great opportunity for the sponsor and State agency staff to provide sites with technical assistance and help ensure the site is running as smoothly as possible.

5. Are churches required to have Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status in order to be eligible to participate in the SFSP as a sponsor?

No. Churches are exempt from this requirement. All other types of private nonprofit sponsors must have tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 in order to be eligible to participate in the SFSP.

6. To participate as a sponsor, how much access will the State government have to my organization's records?

The State government will request records only related to SFSP operations. Sponsors are not required to maintain Program funds in a separate account. But sponsors must be able to account for the receipt, obligation, and expenditure of all the funds provided by the State. State agencies fully train sponsors on recordkeeping requirements prior to approval of sponsor participation.

7. Can afterschool programs participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during the school year operate a summer meals site during the summer?

Yes. Organizations that serve meals or snacks to children only through the at-risk afterschool meals component of CACFP during the school year are generally eligible to serve meals to all children through age 18 under the SFSP during the summer months.



USDA Recorded Webinars

Summer Food Service Program – General Overview

Watch this video to learn about the SFSP, which was established to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals, that meet Federal nutrition guidelines, are provided to all children 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentration of low-income children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkLGT0fRr8w>

Healing Waters Family Center Success Story with Summer Food Service Program

Pastor Joseito Velasquez from the Healing Waters Family Center shares his successes over the past 3 years operating the SFSP. Pastor Velasquez began this program from scratch. His church is located in an area where 90 percent of the population is below the Federal poverty level. He describes events they have hosted and ways they used social media to spread the word about their summer meal program.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_0nRuPtG28

Partner Organization Resources

Let's Move Faith and Communities

Toolkit for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Organizations

Let's Move Faith and Communities is designed to help faith-based and neighborhood organizations transform neighborhoods, engage communities, and promote healthy choices. There are a variety of activities and resources provided in this toolkit, so please don't feel as if you need to do all of them. We invite you to explore the menu of options and decide which ones could work best for your organization.

https://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets_move_toolkit.pdf

Share Our Strength

Faith Based Outreach Resources

Share Our Strength has provided program tips and template resources such as bulletins, flyers, and letters for faith-based organizations.

<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/summer-meals/faith-based-outreach>



Summer Meals Toolkit

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Florida Impact

Strategies for Getting Involved

The Florida Summer Food Service Program, in cooperation with Florida Impact, shares strategies for involvement of faith-based organizations, including successful models, partnership ideas, and tips for site activities.

http://www.summerfoodflorida.org/resources/2014-Faith-Based_StrategiesForGettingInvolved.pdf

For Additional Information

Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and compatible with your Program. For additional questions, sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for help. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

USDA and its recipient institutions share responsibility for compliance and oversight to ensure good stewardship of Federal Funds.



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